



ATTACHMENT C : RESOLUTION 2014.3

MEMBERSHIP RESOLUTION OF  
SAN FRANCISCO YOUTH SOCCER  
APPROVING AMENDED RULES & REGULATIONS

DULY PASSED ON FEBRUARY 11<sup>TH</sup>, 2014

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**AMENDMENT OF RULES & REGULATIONS**

WHEREAS, The organization now runs two leagues and multiple other programs to serve the youth soccer community of San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, The rules of game play should differ for recreational and competitive leagues; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the membership accepts the revised Rules & Regulations, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the directors of San Francisco Youth Soccer are, and each acting alone is, hereby authorized and directed to take such further action as may be necessary, appropriate and advisable to implement this resolution and amendment and any such prior actions are hereby ratified, and

WE, the membership, hereby certify that San Francisco Youth Soccer, is comprised of 454 members, of whom 233, constituting a quorum, were present at an Annual General Meeting duly and regularly called, noticed, and convened and held this 11<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2014, and that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of 229 members, and opposed by 1 member, and that the Resolution has been duly recorded in the minutes and is in due force and effect.

**SAN FRANCISCO YOUTH SOCCER  
RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR LEAGUE PLAY (2014-2015)**

**Table of Contents**

**I. PROVISIONS FOR VARYING TEAM STRENGTH**

- A. Multiple Leagues & Programs
- B. Classification of Registering League
- C. Classification of Strength Bracket
- D. Midseason Rebracketing
- E. Lopsided Games

**II. PROVISIONS FOR VARYING PLAYER STRENGTH**

- A. Minimum Playing Time for Players & Substitution Rules
- B. Rostering Protections for Players
- C. Regulation of Player Poaching

**III. PLAYER REGISTRATION REGULATIONS**

- A. False Rosters or False Players
- B. Underage Players
- C. Adding Players.
- D. Disbanded Teams
- E. Refund Policy
- F. Spectator Code of Conduct
- G. Age Waivers & Age Falsification
- H. Residency
- I. Non-San Francisco Teams

**IV. COACHING, LICENSING, AND Demeanor**

- A. Coaching License Required.
- B. Guest Coaching
- C. Coaching only from Technical Area Only
- D. Coaching Manner & Demeanor
- E. Number of Teams

**V. GAME DAY REGULATIONS & PROCEDURES**

- A. Attire, Equipment, Paperwork
- B. Minimum Number of Players, Delays, No Referee, Kickoff
- C. Spectator Location and Conduct

**VI. REFEREE AUTHORITY**

- A. Offensive Remarks to Players, Referees or Others
- B. Referee Decisions Final
- C. Disagreeing With or Criticizing Referee is Prohibited
- D. Youth Referees
- E. Referee May Submit Report to the League

- F. Trained Volunteer Linesmen
- G. Red Cards and Send-Offs

#### **VII. VIOLATION OF LEAGUE RULES AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

- A. League Officials and Authority.
- B. Violation of Rules
- C. Disciplinary Committee
- D. Protest and Appeals

#### **VIII. SEASON FORMAT, PLAYOFFS & AWARDS**

- A. Season Format
- B. Determination of Season Winners and Runners Up
- C. Modification of Playoff Format
- D. Tiebreakers & Standings Calculations
- E. Trophies

#### **IX. SCHEDULING REQUESTS, RAINOUTS, POSTPONEMENTS, FORFEITS**

- A. Scheduling Requests
- B. Rainouts
- C. No Schedule Changes Once Schedule is Published
- D. \$100 Fine for Failing to Play Scheduled Games

#### **X. AGE GROUP MODIFICATIONS TO LAWS OF THE GAME**

- A. Offside Rule
- B. Ball Size
- C. Free Kick Wall and Penalty Distances
- D. Game Duration
- E. Number of Players on Field

## **San Francisco Youth Soccer Rules & Regulations for League Play**

This organization shall be known as San Francisco Youth Soccer, an association of teams that has centralized certain functions to regulate registration and the implementation of playing leagues. It is hereafter referred to in this document as the “Association.” This Association represents the entire city of San Francisco, and is a custodian of the public trust in balancing the needs of a very diverse community. Our youth come from neighborhoods throughout San Francisco, and from all manner of schools, churches, soccer clubs, friends networks, and sports programs. We have found common ground on the soccer pitch. Eligibility, play and conduct for our games shall be governed by the following regulations:

## **I. PROVISIONS FOR VARYING TEAM STRENGTH**

### **A. Multiple Leagues & Programs.**

Our abiding principle is to have all teams play against competition of similar strength, regardless of how the team was formed, whether it has a paid or volunteer coach, whether it belongs to a Club or is independent. To achieve this goal, we administer several programs and leagues, each suited to teams of different strength and interest level.

- The Recreational league is primarily a recreational/house league open to recreational teams as defined by the League. The primary goal of the recreational league is to provide a safe and enjoyable soccer experience for recreational teams through eighth grade.
- The Competitive league is primarily for competitive teams that practice more frequently, teams that recruit strong players, teams that play year round and attend tournaments during and between seasons, and teams that enjoy playing soccer at a higher level.
- The High School Recreational Program is a playing opportunity for those players who cannot make the commitment to travel/competitive soccer.
- The Travel Program is a way to register and support teams to play in competitive regional leagues at an even higher level.

The rules that follow apply to our two leagues, the recreational and competitive league. For information about our other programs, the high school recreational and the travel program, refer to our website.

### **B. Classification of Registering League.**

The Association shall have the absolute right to determine the recreational or competitive level of each team which registers with one of its Leagues, and shall classify that team accordingly. In classifying a team, the Association may consider any factors which it deems relevant. The basic factors are: team strength reflected by league record, league association rules, how players are selected, number of practices per week, number of leagues played in each year, coaches' experience,, aggressiveness of coaching and/or playing style, quality of coaching, and tournament play. A team which disagrees with its classification may request reconsideration by the Association, however, any such request must be submitted to the League office within 5 days of notice of its classification. The request should address the basic factors set forth above, and must include all information or evidence which it wants the Association to consider. The Association will consider the request but, in no event, shall the League have any obligation to change the team's classification.

Teams promoted to the Travel Program must comply with the "San Francisco Rules for Travel Play," hosted on this Association's website, "[www.sfyouthsoccer.com](http://www.sfyouthsoccer.com)". A team must meet the standard to travel as determined by the Coalition of City Leagues, in cooperation with the San Francisco Recreation & Parks Department.

### **C. Classification of Strength Bracket.**

Consistent with our abiding principle to have teams compete against other teams of similar strength, any team will be further placed in a strength bracket where it challenges and is challenged by its opponents. Every season, teams shall fill out a questionnaire on their past results and recent changes, so that the Association has adequate information to make a suitable placement of each team in the best available bracket. A team providing, or not correcting, misleading information or failing to cooperate fully in the assessment of that team's ability or degree of competitiveness shall be subject to disqualification from playoffs and/or from the League.

#### **D. Midseason Re-bracketing.**

To make sure every team has fair competition, the leagues may schedule only half of the season, then re-bracket by strength at the midway point.

#### **E. Lopsided Games.**

In the recreational league, teams and coaches are strongly encouraged not to run up the score in any game. If one team is stronger than the other, the League encourages the coach of the stronger team to take steps like substituting for stronger players, playing weaker players in forward positions, etc. to even the competition.

The recreational league currently requires that if a team gets a four-goal lead, it must reduce the number of players on the field by one. For each additional goal by the leading team (increase in the lead), the leading team must reduce the number of players on the field by one additional player. If the trailing team scores, the leading team may add back a player, and again with each goal by the trailing team. At no time will either team have more than the maximum or less than the minimum number of players on the field according to their age group rules.

The league may, alternatively, for a season at a time, institute the reverse of that process -- giving the trailing team the chance to add one player to the field when down by 4 goals. If they go down by 5 goals, they can add yet another player, with two extra players being the maximum allowed.

In the competitive leagues, lopsided games are regulated by the regional league of affiliation. It may have a rule discouraging winning by more than 7 goals, or it may have no prohibition at all.

## **II. PROVISIONS FOR VARYING PLAYER STRENGTH**

All teams and coaches are encouraged to find ways to help all players develop and improve during their tenure rostered with a team. At practice, all players should be active and fully participate.

#### **A. Minimum Playing Time for Players & Substitution Rules.**

In Recreational play, the coach shall play each player present at the start of the game for at least one half of the total game time. The only exceptions are if a player is being disciplined for failing to attend or participate in practice, or for a serious violation of a team rule. It is the responsibility of the coach to set up a system to ensure compliance with this rule. Any intentional or flagrant violation of this rule in any game shall result in a loss to the team for that game, and the coach shall be suspended from League play for a minimum of one game. Any repeated violation of this rule will subject the team and coach to disqualification from League play.

To facilitate this minimum playing time requirement, recreational games at the younger ages (U8 through U11) are divided into six periods. Each half has three periods. Substitutions are to be made during these stoppages of play. Substitutions may also be made in case of injury.

In Competitive play, the league does not have any policy or rule regarding minimum playing time. Therefore, substitutions follow the main traditions of FIFA -- on throw-ins, goal kicks and on restarts, or as regulated by the USSF-recognized insuring organization.

### **B. Rostering Protections for Players.**

Teams in the recreational league cannot release players from their roster during a current year because of a player's competitive strength, though they can remove a player from a roster for being disruptive to practices. Between years, recreational teams that want to move up in strength are expected to assist placing players who are not a good fit onto other teams suited to them.

Teams in the competitive leagues can release players from their roster when there is a mismatch between a player's strength and team/bracket strength; however, they are encouraged to help place that player on a team more suited to their strength level.

### **C. Regulation of Player Poaching.**

During the seasonal year, each player is registered for the full year, not just one season. The team and its coaches make plans for the year based on the fair expectation that all players will remain rostered and playing. The Association prohibits a team or coach poaching another team's players during the year. Coaches and teams may not approach another team's players or parents thereof to suggest a player change of teams prior to the expiration of the seasonal year. A coach or team that poaches any player will be ineligible to participate in Association play.

During the registration period for the following playing year, after a team's Intent to Play form has been filed, any person who intentionally disrupts any team's registration by taking or convincing four or more players to switch teams from the team they'd originally intended to register with, or causes any team to disband, in an attempt to seek advantage for particular players, shall be ineligible to participate in Association activities.

Between seasonal years, players are freely able to choose to move to different teams, with no restriction.

## **III. PLAYER REGISTRATION REGULATIONS**

### **A. False Rosters or False Players.**

If a team attempts to play or plays an unregistered player, or a player not on the current roster of the team, or not otherwise eligible for play, the coach will be banned from the Association for one calendar year and the team will be suspended for the balance of the season and all its games will be declared to be forfeits. Any player who presents a false player pass, the player pass of another player or otherwise attempts to represent him or herself as eligible for play shall be banned from the League for a calendar year. If this conduct occurs when three or less regular season games remain to be played, the team, coach and players will all be banned from participation in the subsequent League season. A second violation of this rule by a coach shall result in his or her permanent ban from the Association.

### **B. Underage Players.**

A player can play up in age, up to two years older, but not more than two years older.

### **C. Adding Players.**

The Association shall set a roster cutoff date, which is the last date on which players can be added and still be eligible for playing during the first week of the season; because of the amount of paperwork. Players may be added additionally after the season commences. Teams should expect at least a 5 business day delay between the time at which complete paperwork is submitted and when the player will be eligible to play.

#### **D. Disbanded Teams.**

If a team disbands during the course of the season, the players shall be declared free agents eligible to transfer onto another team in accordance with the USSF organization with which the Association leagues are affiliated.

#### **E. Refund Policy.**

The Association may in its discretion refund part or all of a team's or a player's fees, but will not refund player registration fees nor league player-processing fees. Moreover, the Association gives no refunds after 8:00 a.m. on the first Saturday of the season. As a general policy (but subject to its discretion), the board of directors will not grant refunds to teams whose Association league play is interrupted as a result of disciplinary actions taken by the Association against the team.

#### **F. Spectator Code of Conduct.**

In connection with each player's registration, any parent or custodian who might attend games shall be required to sign a parent statement acknowledging the rules of conduct required for them as spectators.

#### **G. Age Waivers & Age Falsification.**

Without exception, the Association will not grant any age waivers to players. Any player found to have registered or attempted to register with a falsified age will be suspended from all play for one year. Any coach or administrator involved will also be suspended for a minimum of one year.

#### **H. Residency.**

Teams shall follow the rules of residency required by the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department. Currently, this means teams U14 and younger can have a maximum of 2 non-residents of San Francisco. Teams U15 and older can have a maximum of 4 non-residents of San Francisco.

#### **I. Non-San Francisco Teams.**

Teams who reside outside San Francisco are encouraged to play in the leagues we offer, provided they host half their games on home fields outside San Francisco, and provide and pay for referees for their home games.

### **IV. COACHING, LICENSING, AND Demeanor**

#### **A. Coaching License Required.**

All coaches and assistant coaches must be licensed according to the laws of the USSF-recognized insuring organization that the league is affiliated with. Furthermore, a properly licensed and rostered coach must attend every game and be in the technical area during the game, unless an adult has a temporary permission letter signed by the association President or its staff. Any team which does not have a licensed coach present at all times during a game shall be ineligible to participate, or continue to participate in that game.

#### **B. Guest Coaching.**

If allowed by the USSF-recognized insuring organization, guest coaches can coach games for other teams, provided they are also licensed and rostered to at least one other Association team.

### **C. Coaching only from Technical Area Only.**

Only a properly licensed coach or assistant coach who is within the team's technical area is authorized to issue tactical instructions or coach any player during a game. No team may have more than two coaches during a game. Any person, whether or not properly licensed, who is not in the team's technical area and who issues tactical instructions or coaches any player during a game shall be subject to removal from the game and discipline by the Association, including being banned from league games and revocation of coaching privileges in the leagues.

### **D. Coaching Manner & Demeanor.**

The tone of voice from coaches should be informative and not a harangue. Loud and/or constant sideline coaching is not in and of itself a violation of this section; provided however that sideline coaching must be toned down, reduced or stopped at the discretion of the referee, when in the opinion of the referee, loud and/or constant coaching is intimidating, disruptive, confusing or otherwise unfair or unsporting to the other team. No derogatory, insulting, abusive or offensive remarks or profanity can be used. The penalty for violation of the above shall be ejection from the game and disciplinary action by the Association.

### **E. Number of Teams.**

A coach can only be listed as the Head Coach on a maximum of two teams. A coach can be the Assistant Coach on any number of teams.

## **V. GAME DAY REGULATIONS & PROCEDURES**

### **A. Attire, Equipment, Paperwork.**

#### **1. Home Team.**

The home team must provide the referee with a game card and provide the game ball. The coach or assistant coach of each team must complete and submit the game card to the referee at least 10 minutes prior to game time.

#### **2. Team Colors/Jerseys.**

Players must wear matching jerseys. Each player on a particular team must have a number on his jersey and such number must be different from the numbers on his teammates' jerseys. The goalie must wear something to distinguish the goalie from the other players on either team. The home team shall have the first responsibility to change colors in case of a color conflict, but both teams shall share the responsibility of resolving any such conflict. The color change may be accomplished with a change in jerseys or, alternatively one team can wear pinnies.

#### **3. Proof of Player Insurance and Emergency Information Required at Each Game.**

Every game, teams must bring player cards or official rosters proving registration of each player to that team, and present them to the referee. In addition, to every game, teams must bring a signed medical release waiver for each player, allowing emergency medical care to be provided in case of injury.

#### **4. Casts, Splints and Jewelry Prohibited.**

Players wearing orthopedic casts, air-splints, metal splints, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, jewelry or any other thing which is a danger to another player shall not be eligible to



participate or continue to participate in any League game. The only exception is players with a letter from the Association President granting exemption for religious reasons, after the Association President has examined the jewelry in person. Prescription glasses and prescription sports goggles are allowed as long as they are not tinted.

**5. Shin Guards.** Shin guards are mandatory equipment for all players.

**6. Footwear.** Soccer cleats are recommended but players may play with sneakers. Players may NOT play with shoes that have a cleat right under the middle toe, such as baseball shoes and American football cleats.

**B. Minimum Number of Players, Delays, No Referee, Kickoff.**

**1. Minimum Number of Players.** In order to start playing a game, a team must have present at least seven players for U12 and above and at least five players for U11 and below.

**2. Game Time and Delays.**

The referee shall be responsible for keeping the game on schedule. If the game starts late due to the lack of readiness of the teams, the referee will reduce the halves proportionately from when the game actually commences in order to finish play at the scheduled time. If a team delays the start of play by 10 minutes, it shall be awarded a loss for that game. If neither team has completed the game card, or is otherwise not ready to commence play, within 10 minutes of the scheduled start time, the game shall be abandoned and both teams shall be given a loss. The game shall not be rescheduled.

If a game start is delayed for reasons unrelated to the readiness of the teams, the referee shall still reduce each half proportionately to insure prompt start of the next game scheduled for that field. If a delayed start will not delay the start of the following game, or if no game follows on that field, the halves will not be shortened.

If a partial team shows up but the game is declared a forfeit, the team shall have to follow the procedure for a forfeiting team, as described below.

**3. Absence of Referee.**

In the absence of an appointed referee, the team coaches will either find a licensed referee or each coach will referee one half of the game, and the game will be official if played. The home team will referee the first half of the game and the away team will referee the second half of the game. The coaches are responsible for ensuring that the game is played in a safe manner. A coach who is acting as a referee may not coach his team while he is acting as referee.

**4. Coin Toss.** Prior to the start of play the referee shall conduct a coin toss with the captains of each team. The team winning the toss decides which goal it will defend in the first half of the game. The other team takes the kickoff.

**5. Injuries.** In case of any injury requiring medical attention during a game or a practice session, the coach or team parent must notify the League office on the next working day. Players bleeding from a wound must leave the field for treatment.

## **C. Spectator Location and Conduct.**

### **1. Location of Players, Coaches and Spectators.**

Both teams, including team players and a maximum of two coaches, shall be on one sideline, and all spectators of both teams (including other coaches and team parents) shall set up on the opposite sideline. In the event that there is only one side of the field available for spectators, each set of spectators and coaches will occupy the sideline of one half of the pitch. At all games at the Polo Field spectators must stay off the field and outside the fence. All spectators must stand at least three feet back from the sideline to enable players to use the entire field. The coaches shall be responsible for ensuring that spectators follow this rule.

### **2. Goal Lines Must Be Clear.**

The goal lines must be clear of spectators, debris, team equipment and signs at all times. Coaches are required to assist the referee in keeping the goal lines clear. If requested to do so, the coaches shall ask a team parent or spectator to clear the goal line. If any team member, parent or team spectator refuses to move from the goal line, and if the coach refuses to assist the referee, the coach shall be subject to disciplinary action.

### **3. No Alcohol.**

No alcoholic beverages, controlled substances or use of tobacco products are allowed by any team representative, team official, player, parent or spectator at or near a field on which any soccer game is being played. Any violation shall subject the individual to suspension or removal from the venue and/or being banned from League venues, and shall subject the team to disqualification from League play.

### **4. Coach Responsible for Conduct of Spectators.**

Coaches are responsible for the good conduct of parents and spectators supporting their team. If, in the opinion of the referee, the coach has failed to control his or her sideline or team parents or spectators, the coach may be ejected. If a coach is ejected, and no other licensed coach can substitute, the game will be called to an end and considered officially played.

## **VI. REFEREE AUTHORITY**

### **A. Offensive Remarks to Players, Referees or Others.**

No coach, team parent, player, substitute player or spectator is to use profanity or make any derogatory, insulting, abusive or offensive remarks or gestures to anyone at the game including referees, their own or other players, substitutes or spectators.

### **B. Referee Decisions Final.**

The decision of the referee will be final on all matters concerning the rules of the game, and except for actions, decisions or awards by League Officials, the referee shall be the final authority concerning the control of the players, conduct of the coaches and spectators, and all matters concerning the playing field. No one may indicate in any way their displeasure or disagreement with the actions of the referee (whether it is the direction of a throw in, the award of a penalty kick, or otherwise). If someone feels after the game that the referee was not competent, they may submit a written report to the League office. There is a space to provide comments on the referee when reporting scores through the association's website. The League keeps a record of such reports on referees.

### **C. Disagreeing With or Criticizing Referee is Prohibited.**

Any person disputing (in any manner), criticizing, questioning or refusing to comply with any decision of the referee, or guilty of abusive language or conduct to a referee before, during or after a game, shall be subject to suspension or ejection from the game, and, along with the team such person is associated with, further discipline from the League, which may include probation, further suspensions and/or being banned from League games. The sole exception to this rule is if a coach feels that a game has become dangerous to the players, then the head coach may approach the referee and confer with the referee and the other coach. If after discussion the complaining coach is not satisfied, his only recourse is to abandon the game and accept a loss. The League may condition probation and/or suspension of any discipline upon apology to the referee, completion of a test on the laws of the game, and/or completion of a coaching or referee seminar or course. This rule will not apply to complaints issued directly to the Association in the format set by the League.

### **D. Youth Referees.**

Youth referees (referees under 18 years of age) have the same power as adult referees. Youth referees are only responsible for communicating with the coaches and players concerning game issues. A youth referee need not communicate with any other adults before, during, or after a game. While at the field (even when not officiating), a youth referee at any time and in his discretion may approach the coaches and make "a demand for support" concerning the conduct of an adult or player at the field, including the other coach. Once a demand for support is made, the coach(es) shall work with the youth referee to resolve the situation including conveying the ruling, caution or red card of the youth referee to an offending coach, adult, or player and protecting the youth referee from any resulting abuse, particularly coach or adult abuse. Any abuse will be reported to the League by email the same day by the coach(es) and the youth referee. The League shall take disciplinary action in its discretion. At the check-in of teams by a youth referee, each coach shall state to the referee that he is aware of this rule.

Because of the special issues presented by youth referees, the Association shall have wider authority regarding games which were refereed by youth referees. The Association shall take reasonable steps to investigate allegations of abuse of, criticisms of, humiliation of, embarrassment of or other actions towards a youth referee. The League may impose game sanctions after the fact, including without limitation: awarding of red cards; coach gag orders with respect to future games; suspensions or other discipline of teams, team officials or team affiliated persons; forfeiture of games; or any other sanctions the board or disciplinary committee feels is warranted by the facts.

### **E. Referee May Submit Report to the League.**

If a referee sees a coach or team violating any league rules, the referee may submit a report to the Association office (without announcing it at the game) and the Association will take appropriate actions including suspending or expelling the coach or the entire team, issuing coach gag orders or other action.

### **F. Trained Volunteer Linesmen.**

The Association leagues may designate that at certain ages, each team must provide a Volunteer Linesperson to help the center referee. Currently, the Recreational league uses Volunteer Linespeople at the ages of U9 and older. At the U9 through U11 age, the Volunteer Linesperson just calls in and out of play. At U12 and older, the Volunteer Linespeople also help call offside. If the team fails to register, train and supply a VAR to its games, the team may be referred to the Disciplinary Committee, which may decline the team's registration, impose a financial penalty, or decrease its priority ranking in practice field requests.

### **G. Red Cards and Send-Offs.**

Any player receiving a red card shall be suspended for the remainder of that game, and for at least the next game, and for additional games as provided by affiliated league rules for the offense for which the red card was issued. A coach receiving a send-off shall be automatically suspended for the remainder of that game, and for at least the next game, and for additional games as provided by affiliated-league rules for the offense for which the red card was issued. Issuance of a red card shall be reported to the Association Disciplinary Committee for review, and further action, if warranted. Any protest or appeal of the issuance of the red card, or any additional discipline, must be submitted as provided in these rules. No player or coach shall participate in an Association game during the suspensions provided by this rule whether or not the referee takes the player's pass or the coach's card, or the player's pass or coach's card is returned by the referee or anyone else prior to the end of the suspension.

## **VII. VIOLATION OF LEAGUE RULES AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

### **A. Association and League Officials and Authority.**

Association and League Officials are the officers, directors, staff, age group commissioners and any other persons appointed by the President to an Association or League position. League Officials have the authority to monitor and control all League activities and venues, and shall have authority over all persons present. League Officials have the authority to temporarily halt, suspend or terminate any game or activity, if in their opinion any unsafe, violent or condition in violation of League rules exists. Any person who interferes with or disputes the actions or decisions of a League Official shall be automatically suspended or banned for at least two games, and shall be subject to further discipline including loss or suspension of coaching privileges and being banned from all League activities. A League Official may award a loss to any team which persists in conduct after being instructed to cease or correct the conduct. Any person who strikes or physically touches a League Official in a hostile manner shall automatically be banned from League activities for a minimum of one year, whether or not the actions or decisions of the League Officials are upheld.

### **B. Violation of Rules.**

Violations of the Association rules by any team or person will constitute grounds for disciplinary action by the Association which may include suspension, expulsion, banning from Association league games, awarding losses, loss of coaching privileges, and other measures the Association deems appropriate. Each coach, player or other person participating in or attending any Association league game or activity shall be responsible for knowing the minimum suspension or discipline for violation of Association league rules, and upon being informed that he or she has violated any Association league rule shall be deemed to have notice of any applicable minimum suspension or discipline, including suspensions or ejections for red cards. Any protest or appeal of any such decision or award must be submitted in accordance with these rules.

### **C. Disciplinary Committee.**

An Association disciplinary committee shall be appointed by the Association's President and shall be empowered to review all violations of League rules, and impose discipline or sanctions, in addition to any required or minimum discipline or sanctions provided by affiliated-league or association rules.

### **D. Protest and Appeals.**

Any protest or appeal of any discipline, decision or award must be in writing and postmarked not later than 72 hours after notice (Sundays and holidays excluded). Notice of any discipline, decision or award

is deemed given at the time the discipline, decision or award is announced, which shall include the awarding of any red card. Notice of any discipline or penalty in excess of any minimum or automatic discipline or penalty shall be deemed given upon receipt either orally or in writing. Any protest or appeal must set forth in detail the grounds for the protest or appeal and contain all documents, evidence and information which the person submitting it desires the Association to consider, and shall be accompanied by a fee of two hundred dollars (\$200.00), which shall be returned if the protest or appeal is upheld. Failure to submit a proper protest or appeal within the time allowed, or without the fee, shall constitute a waiver of any protest or appeal and acceptance of the discipline, decision or award. Upon proper submission of a protest or appeal, a hearing shall be held with not less than seven days notice. Only the evidence or information contained in the written protest or appeal, and any referee report or other information or evidence gathered by the League, shall be considered at the hearing. At the hearing any discipline, decision or award may be increased, decreased or affirmed.

In the case of any offense or abuse committed against any referee or Association or Association league official, the correctness or incorrectness of any decision or award precipitating the offense shall not be considered as a ground for protest. The only proper places to raise any complaints about such decisions or awards are with the League or referee association.

In the matter of protests and appeals, no person associated with the operation of this Association shall invoke the aid of the courts of any state or of the United States without first exhausting all available remedies within the appropriate soccer organizations, including a final appeal to the annual general meeting of the USYSA.

## **VIII. SEASON FORMAT, PLAYOFFS & AWARDS**

### **A. Season Format.**

Scheduling for the season attempts to equally balance these conflicting desires: 1) the need for teams and referees to know their schedule well in advance and accommodate scheduling requests; and, 2) the desire to play opponents of equal strength, and 3) the desire to play a wide variety of teams, not just the same few teams over and over. By creating larger brackets, teams get more variety of opponent. By creating smaller brackets, teams can be sure to be facing close competition. Playoff games are thrilling, but they can't be planned in advance for referees or families.

To simultaneously address these various priorities, the leagues shall have the freedom to do a mix of group play games, playoff round games, and playoff games, of varying bracket sizes. The leagues shall occasionally poll teams to ask which of the varying priorities matters most to them.

### **B. Determination of Season Winners and Runners Up.**

The competitive leagues determine winners solely on the basis of seasonal league play.

The recreational league will not publish standings for the U8 and U9 age groups; it will only publish individual game results. At U10 and above, it will publish standings, and the season will close out with some form of playoffs, or a playoff round.

### **C. Modification of Playoff Format.**

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Association's president may modify the playoff format by

announcing a different format not later than November 1. In addition, the League president may modify the playoff format at any time in the event of rain or other field closures in any manner that he or she deems necessary to complete the season.

#### **D. Tiebreakers & Standings Calculations**

Standings are based on average points per game. By calculating average, it removes the discrepancy when teams play an unequal number of games, due to rainouts or byes. In the recreational division, during the playoff round, games against teams from other strength brackets will be marked “friendly” and not counted in the standings.

Standings Tiebreakers are applied as follows:

1. If there is still a tie atop the standings for first or second place, we'll take a look at head-to-head competition, beginning with the Playoff Round. If teams have played twice and the Playoff Round matchup was a tie (or not played each other except for in the Group Stage), we will compare head to head in Group Stage play.
2. In the rare case where there remains a tie, we'll look at head-to-head vs. next strongest team in the standings. If both teams have beat the next strongest teams in the standings (that both teams have played), then we'll look at goal differential in those games (against the next strongest team). If the tiebreaker is for second place, note that "the next strongest team" may be a team that finished first ahead of them.
3. If still tied, then we look at the goal differential across all playoff round games up to a maximum of +3 per game.
4. The final tiebreaker is goals against across all playoff round games.

#### **E. Trophies.**

Medals acknowledge a player's participation in a season. Trophies recognize the perseverance to best quality opponents. While trophies make children happy, their meaning becomes devalued if they are too easy to earn. In the Recreational league, medals will be given to all players U9 and younger. At U10 and older, trophies will be awarded to the champions and 2nd place teams in each strength bracket. In the recreational league, the ideal target is for 1/3 of players to win trophies, if scheduling allows for brackets of six teams; sometimes it may be 7 or 8 team brackets, and only occasionally 5 or 4 teams to a bracket. Other teams will receive participation medals for each player.

In the competitive league, trophies will be given to all the players on the bracket champions and the 2nd place teams, no matter the size of the bracket. Alternatively, a larger team trophy or cup can substitute for individual trophies, if the league decides to implement that option for a season.

### **IX. SCHEDULING REQUESTS, RAINOUTS, POSTPONEMENTS, FORFEITS**

#### **A. Scheduling Requests.**

Teams with scheduling requests should file a Scheduling Request form according to the date(s) specified on the League website (usually not less than four weeks prior to the publication of the schedule for the season). Oral and emailed requests will be ignored. The notification should include the request and the reasons for the request. Though there is no guarantee the leagues can accommodate any single requests, the leagues will make reasonable efforts to accommodate requests according to the following priorities:

- 1) requests related to religious holidays, such as Yom Kippur (recreational league only)
- 2) season-related requests for teams that volunteer time for the league, doing such tasks as lining fields, setting up goals, administering clinics, and processing paperwork.
- 3) one-time requests for SSAT test-takers
- 4) approved tournament weekends for competitive teams, if the request is on file prior to the season being scheduled, but not if the team decides to attend a tournament after the scheduling is completed.
- 5) one-time requests for a game at a specific part of the day to accommodate a school event that affects a significant portion of the team's players.

The league will not resolve scheduling conflicts caused by players participating in other San Francisco leagues or sports. Teams with players playing in another league enter the League at their own risk and will be subject to the penalties described below if they forfeit a game due to a conflict. Teams who provide substantial volunteer assistance to the League will get first priority in scheduling requests.

#### **B. Rainouts.**

Rained out games will be called by the Association president or other official. Notice of rainouts will be posted on the League's website. It is the responsibility of each team to check the website. If a team fails to show up for a game that has not been canceled, it shall be awarded a loss and be required to pay the forfeit penalty of \$100 as otherwise provided herein.

#### **C. No Schedule Changes Once Schedule is Published.**

Once league schedules for the season have been published, it shall be Association policy not to grant a schedule change except based on substantial justification undiscoverable before or arising after the schedule was published. Conflicting games in other leagues, long weekends, team parties, or similar events are not considered substantial justification. If a schedule change is granted, it is the responsibility of the coach to contact the opposing coach, commissioner and the referee coordinator.

Commissioners do not have authority to reschedule or cancel any games. All rescheduling or cancellations must be approved by the League president. No changes to scheduled games will be approved after the Monday before the game. Teams rescheduling a game without the approval of the League president shall each be awarded a loss.

#### **D. \$100 Fine for Failing to Play Scheduled Games.**

If a team will be unable to make a scheduled game it must notify the opposing coach, the age group commissioner and the League office by email, as soon as possible but no later than Monday prior to the subject game. Except in the case of exigent circumstances, any team that forfeits a game will be fined \$100 (regardless of notice given), which amount shall be paid to the League before the team's next scheduled game, failing which the team shall be suspended for the balance of the season. Teams which fail to provide the notices described above will be subject to additional penalties.

## **X. AGE GROUP MODIFICATIONS TO LAWS OF THE GAME**

By and large, the Association leagues will follow the FIFA Laws of the Game, and we seek to have as few age modifications as possible, for the following two reasons: 1) rules modifications are very hard for referees to keep straight, so it results in either incorrect calls or arguments on the field, and 2) players, coaches and spectators should see the game as its played professionally and historically. There are only a few exceptions:

### **A. Offside Rule.**

In recreational soccer, the offside rule shall not be called during the U8 year. That said, coaches are expected to not position their players to stand offside or cherry-pick behind the defense. At all other years, including the U8 year of competitive soccer, the offside rule is observed.

### **B. Ball Size.**

At U8, the ball shall be size 3. From U9 to U12, the ball shall be a size 4. From U13 onwards, the ball shall be a full size 5. When two teams play across age, the game shall defer to the younger team's ball size, unless both teams agree to use the larger ball.

### **C. Free Kick Wall and Penalty Distances.**

At all ages, penalty kicks and direct kicks are called by the Laws of the Game. However, wall distances are as follows: At U8 through U11, 8 yards. U12 and older, 10 yards. In addition, penalty kick distances are as follows: at U8 and U9, 8 yards. U10 through U11, 10 yards. U12 and older, 12 yards.

### **D. Game Duration.**

At U8, games are two 20 minute halves. U9 and U10, halves are 25 minutes. U11 and U12, halves are 30 minutes, U13 and U14, halves are 35 minutes.

### **E. Number of Players on Field.**

At U8, teams shall have 7 players on the field, one of whom shall be a goalkeeper.

At U9 through U11, teams shall have 8 players on the field.

At U12 and older, teams shall have 11 players on the field (no age group modification).